

GETTING STARTED

To obtain more information on how to earn a high school equivalency diploma, contact your local high school or technical college for further assistance. You can get information about programs and organizations that offer GED/HSED preparation programs, as well as locations of GED testing centers.

MORE INFORMATION

Once you earn a GED certificate or HSED, it is very likely that employers or educational institutions will require you to forward certified transcripts as proof you have graduated. You may access our order form through the DPI website at <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsis/let/pdf/ged-order.pdf> or request an order form using the contact information on the back of this brochure.

The GED/HSED office does not keep partial records from GED testing. The office only keeps transcripts of those who have passed all the GED/HSED tests and received a Wisconsin credential.

CONTACT

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OPENING DOORS

High School
Equivalency Diploma
or
GED Certificate



Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

PROGRAM CHOICES: GED OR HSED:

If you have not completed high school and want to seek more education and perhaps a better job, you have at least two options that can open the doors to your future. This brochure helps you make that choice.

Your first option is to take and pass the General Educational Development tests and career awareness. You will then be issued a Certificate of General Educational Development.

You can go further by choosing your second option and obtaining a High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED). This includes taking and passing the GED tests in combination with education in career awareness, health, citizenship, and employability skills. There are five different options to earn an HSED, which are explained below. About 10,000 Wisconsin adults will decide to earn a high school equivalency diploma this year. Join them. Open the door to your future!

The five options available to earn an HSED are:

- Pass the GED tests, complete the health, citizenship, and employability skills requirements, and receive career awareness counseling
- Earn any missing high school credits at a local high school or technical college
- Finish 24 semester credits or 32 quarter credits at a university or technical college, including instruction in any area of study you didn't cover in high school
- Complete a foreign degree or diploma program
- Complete a program offered by a technical college or community-based group that has been approved by the state superintendent of public instruction as a high school completion program

A high school diploma or HSED is a minimum requirement for most jobs today. For all branches of the military, the University of Wisconsin System, and a growing number of employers, the GED certificate is not the same as a high school diploma or HSED.

For most of you, the best option for earning an HSED is to enroll in a technical college or participate in a program offered by a community-based group. A counselor will test your reading skills and talk about your career interests and working skills in a counseling session. In the counseling session, you will learn which of the high school equivalency diploma options are available to you.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

To earn an HSED in Wisconsin, you must meet certain requirements:

Age You must be at least 18 years and six months old and provide proof of your age in order to take the GED tests, or the class with which you entered grade 9 must have graduated from high school. Under the Compulsory School Attendance law, 17-year-olds may be permitted to enroll in a program that leads to an HSED and begin taking the GED tests.

Class Status You are required to attend school to age 18. If you are not 18 years and six months old, you may still take the test if the class with which you entered grade 9 has graduated from high school.

Residency You must be a legal resident of Wisconsin; you may be asked to prove residency.

DIPLOMA OR CERTIFICATE?

Remember: You may pass the five GED tests and receive a GED certificate, but *it is not the same as a high school equivalency diploma*. You should think carefully about whether this is a good choice for you, or whether you should go on to earn an HSED.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

While the GED certificate by itself can help show that you have reached a certain level of education, please keep in mind it is less than an HSED:

- With an HSED, you can expect to make an average of \$100,000 more in lifetime income than someone without a high school credential.
- Nearly all local, state, and federal civil service jobs and apprenticeships (plumber, electrician, and other trades) require or highly recommend a high school credential.
- Without a high school diploma or HSED, you are more likely to be out of work and for longer periods of time than someone who has earned a high school credential. Many employers screen out applicants who do not present a high school credential.
- If you are planning a military career (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, National Guard), you often cannot enlist or re-enlist without some form of a high school credential.
- Most colleges and universities and many technical colleges recommend that students wishing to enter their programs possess some form of high school credential.

As you can see, having earned a high school equivalency diploma does make a difference.